

Isabella Wilkie Rose Shiels

The following document traces Isabella's ancestors on her mother's side, the family Rose



Isabella Whiteford 1813-1894

Mother of Eliza Millar. Isabella's parents, James Whiteford - a shoemaker - and Christian White, were both living in Kirkliston when they married there in 1791. Two years later, they gave birth to their oldest daughter Margaret in Carnwath, Lanarkshire, but then moved back east, this time to Uphall, West Lothian. Twins Edward and Christian followed in 1808, and Isabella was born in 1813, by which time her mother was 43 years old.

Nothing else is known about Isabella's early life until she met John Millar from Linlithgow and gave birth to his child Eliza in 1837. John either died shortly after this or moved away: records show that Isabella was living in 1841 with her father James, at a steading called Camphill (now demolished), 200 feet south of the Union Canal just outside Philpstoun (3 miles north of Uphall). From here on, Isabella spent her life moving around. In 1850, having moved to Kirkliston with Eliza, she was employed as a farm labourer. She adopted a baby called James Bird, whose parents hailed from Dalmeny. However, James lived to be only 16 months old, dying in the summer of 1851.

Young Eliza left Isabella in the 1850s to become a dairymaid in Leith, so by 1861 Isabella was on her own. At this point she was living in Millrig House outside Kirknewton where she was employed as a farm labourer. By the 1870s Isabella had moved yet again, and was living with her older brother John - a shoemaker like his father - in Corstorphine village. They are recorded as residing along with a number of families in a large house in the High Street to which the post office was attached. Isabella's occupation was "out worker" which meant she laboured for a farm property but didn't live on it.

The 1881 Census shows that Isabella was living on her own in Corstorphine, so her brother had evidently died. She had moved to Paterson's Building in "The Slap": this was the local name for the lane which became Manse Road. Despite being in her late sixties, Isabella was employed as a "labourer in gardens". She subsequently moved into Leith and spent the last few years of her life there. It is probable that she moved there to be near to daughter Eliza, her only surviving family member. She lived on the ground floor of a tenement at 4 Ferrier Street (now demolished) off Easter Road, not far from Eliza, who by now was living at Whitfield Lane (later re-named Crown Place). By the time Isabella died in 1894 she, Eliza and Eliza's family had all moved into 7 Cadiz Street. Isabella was still in employment, even as she approached 80, working as a domestic servant. The cause of her death was noted as "Senectus", a Latin word for senility: this suggests she had been suffering some form of dementia. She had this for 16 days before death, which suggests her mental deterioration had been brought on, or aggravated by, a stroke.



Uphall in the 19th century. Main Street, looking west

Outhouses at Millrig Farm about a mile west of Kirknewton, where Isabella Whiteford worked as a labourer in the 1860s. It suffered a major fire in 1913, and is now used partly as a farm and partly as office space for other organisations.



Left: two views of Corstorphine High Street in (above) 1890 and (below) 1900. In the preceding half-century, the population of the village had risen from around 300 to 2,700. Isabella Whiteford would have seen this change happening throughout the 1870s and 1880s. She was employed in one of the many market gardens which were then springing up in Corstorphine.



Irish Corner
Corstorphine High Street around 1890.



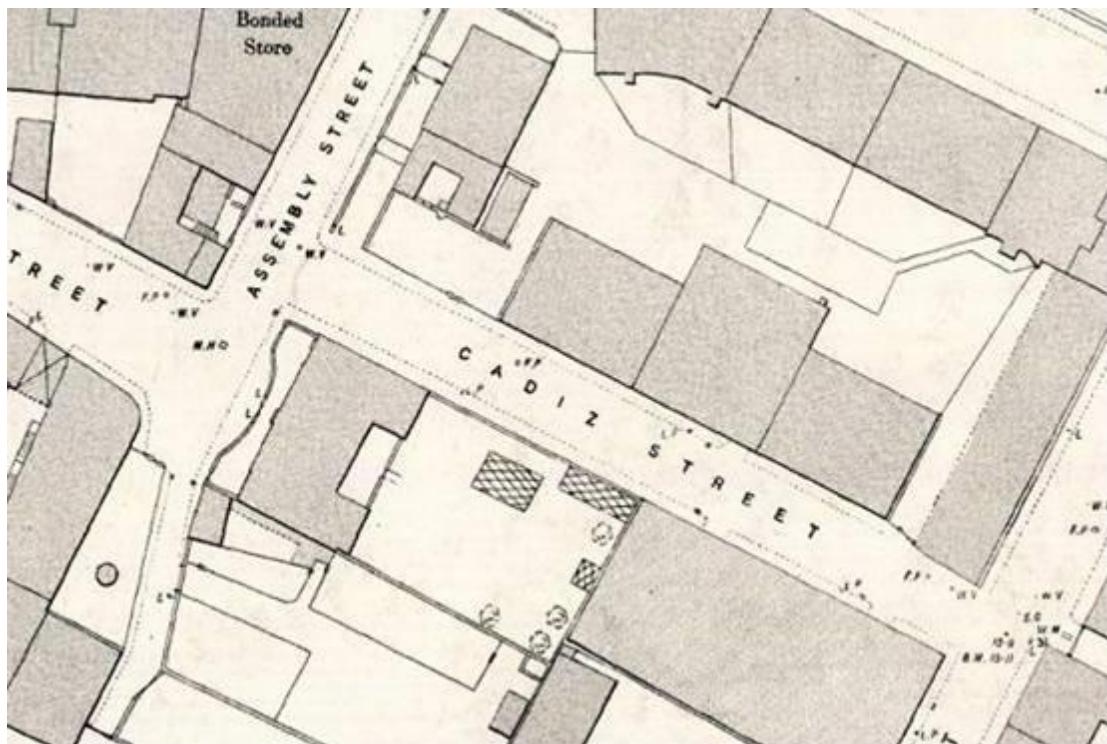
Paterson's Building in "The Slap": this was the local name for the lane which became Manse Road. Isabella Whiteford lived here in the 1880s before moving into Leith.



Photo taken outside 18 Ferrier Street, Leith. Isabella lived in the 1890s at No. 4, further down the street on the left. Easter Road can be seen in the distance. Leith Central Railway Station was behind these tenements to the left. The street and the station were demolished in the 1970s to make way for a swim centre, supermarket with car park, and sheltered housing.



Tolbooth Wynd, looking towards the Kirkgate. This was the lively heart of Leith in Isabella Whiteford's time, and remained so until it was demolished in the 1960s to be replaced by housing.



Cadiz Street as it looked when Isabella Whiteford died there in 1894. This part of Leith, between Constitution Street and Salamander Street was one of the most industrialised parts of the town. It contained whisky bonds, food factories and – over to the east in Bath Street – the Leith Roperie, a major employer of Leithers.

George Nicol 1843-1871

Father of William Nicol Rose. George's parents, George Nicol and Mary McPherson came from near the small village of Strachan, near Banchory in Aberdeenshire. His father was a shoemaker there, on a steading south of the river Feugh called "Templeton". About five years later, the family moved to a steading a few miles east, called "Roadside". By the time he was 18, the family had moved again, this time to Kincardine O'Neil, a few miles to the north-west, where George worked for his father as a ploughman on a farm steading called "Hillhead". This was subsequently abandoned (although it was re-discovered in the 1990s when it was the subject of an archaeological dig – as was Templeton).

In 1870, by the age of 27, George had moved to Edinburgh, and was lodging with an Irish family at 423 Lawnmarket. This building has since been demolished and replaced by the High Court, between Bank Street and St Giles Street. In January of 1870, George had a liaison with Jessie Rose, and their son William Nicol Rose was born in October, out of wedlock. The couple never married. Unusually for a woman of her class, Jessie gave birth to William at the Royal Maternity Hospital, which at this time was at 2 Chapel Street in the Potterrow area of Edinburgh.

At this time, George was employed as a policeman. However, when he later married laundry-maid Elizabeth Graham of Hamilton, Lanarkshire, in November 1871 he gave his occupation as "labourer". This is not surprising since it was a sackable offence for a policeman to have a child out of wedlock. A month after his wedding, at the age of 28, George contracted smallpox and died in the Edinburgh Fever Hospital. This was in Forrest Road in Edinburgh's Southside, situated at the end of the small cul-de-sac called Forrest Hill.



Part of Templeton farm steading, about a mile south of Strachan, where George Nicol spent his early childhood.

Crathes Castle, outside Banchory. George Nicol's mother was born in Banchory and moved to Strachan where George was born.



St Leonard's Street, looking north to The Pleasance. The street to the left is South Richmond Street. George Nicol spent the last year of his short life in Roxburgh Terrace, about 100 yards down the road to the right, out of the picture. The buildings in the centre of the picture have been demolished and a medical centre now stands on the site.



View looking west up the Lawnmarket. Bank Street is on the left, and George IV Bridge is to the right. George Nicol's house is just out of shot to the right. This photo was probably taken in the 1890s, 20 years after George died.



View looking east down the Lawnmarket, taken around the time George Nicol lived here. The building he lived in is marked with a red cross. This is now the Edinburgh High Court. Public hangings were carried out just across the road at the top of George IV Bridge: the last one was in 1864, a few years before George Nicol lived here.



The Flodden Wall in Roxburgh Terrace. The Pleasance is at the foot of the street behind the photographer. George Nicol lived just out of shot to the left of the picture.



Roxburgh Terrace, now part of Drummond Street. This view is looking towards The Pleasance. George Nicol lived here for a month with his new wife before dying of smallpox in the Fever Hospital in Forrest Road. George's house was number 8 (marked by the red cross). This photo was taken in the 1960s, shortly before all the buildings seen here were demolished.

Jessie Rose 1841-1931

Mother of William Nicol Rose. Born near Duthil in the parish of Cromdale, Morayshire (3 miles east of Grantown-on-Spey). Jessie spent the first 10 years of her life living on her uncle Alexander's farm (highland children were often brought up by relatives other than their parents. The farm was named "Balnachreigh" (this is the farm steading now spelt "Balnacruie", east of Duthil). Living there were her maternal grandmother Ann (formerly a baker who died in 1858 at the age of 86); her mother's brother Alexander Grant; Alexander's sister, Marjory; Jessie's sister Isabella; and a farmer's servant called Samuel Young. Her father John Rose is listed as a farmer. Her mother's name is given as Jessie Grant.

The name of the farm and the farms surrounding it were Gaelic names, and the census returns show that Jessie spoke Gaelic as well as English. Her English was in the Doric dialect, which was spoken in all the areas between Aberdeen and Inverness. This would have made Jessie hard to understand when she moved to Edinburgh at some point in the 1860s.

By the time she was 20, Jessie was living and working as a servant on a sizeable farm belonging to one Robert McGregor. The farm was at Lower Balmenach, half-a-mile north of the Balmenach distillery. Jessie's name in the 1861 census is given as the more formal "Janet". It was common for census clerks to change Highland names this way (in fact, the parish record of Jessie's christening from 1841 also shows both her and her mother as "Janet").

In 1864, while working as a domestic servant at Skye of Curr farm in the Cromdale area, Jessie gave birth out of wedlock to a son named John, whose father was a ploughman named William McIntosh. After Jessie moved to Edinburgh in the later 1860s, John is shown in the census returns as living with her parents.

In 1865, Jessie gave birth again, this time to a daughter Margaret. There is no record of the father's name.

Jessie moved to Edinburgh and obtained employment as a cook and lived at 30 Norton Place, Abbeyhill (this tenement has been subsequently demolished and is now part of West Norton Place). In October 1870, still unmarried, Jessie gave birth to William Nicol Rose. William's father was an Edinburgh policeman, George Nicol. village, Strachan, it is possible that the two knew each other from their time up north. Jessie's baby was adopted by a couple, William and Mary Mossman living in 2 Poplar Lane, off Leith Links. By the following April, Jessie was working as a domestic servant for gas meter manufacturer Andrew Fullerton, and was residing in his family home at Liberton (see Historic Note). Fullerton's factory was in Lower London Road, about a hundred yards from where Jessie had previously been living, so she may have known someone who worked there and gave her an introduction to Andrew Fullerton.

In late 1872, Jessie married John Kay, a soldier of the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, based at Edinburgh Castle. They married at 2 Middleby Street, Newington. By now, Jessie had left the employ of the Fullertons and the couple were living at 6 Ritchie Place, at the foot of Brown Street in the Dumbiedykes area of South Edinburgh. This street has now been demolished: all that remains is a cycle path and some trees.

A decade later, the couple were living at 1 Gilchrist's Entry, off Greenside Row (this whole area degenerated into slum property and was eventually rebuilt as office space and the Omni Centre). By this time, they had twin sons, Donald and Peter; and John Kay was employed as a porter for a printing company. In the early 1890s, John and Jessie were living in a basement flat, 40a Cumberland Street, in Edinburgh's New Town. They had produced three more children and adopted a foster son called William McKenzie. It is curious that Jessie decided to adopt a child, having earlier given her own son William away. By 1901, John had died after a fall in the street and Jessie was living with all the family (including the adopted son) at 24 Calton Hill, between Leith Street and Waterloo Place.

By 1915, Jessie had moved with her family to 7 India Place in Stockbridge (all the houses there have now been demolished). Her daughter, also called Jessie, died there that year at the age of 34 of tuberculosis.

When she died in the early hours of New Year's morning in 1931, Jessie was still living at 7 India Place. Jessie was last seen alive at 4am (presumably by New Year visitors) and was found dead in bed at 6am, having succumbed to heart disease. She was 89 years old.

Historic Note

The Fullerton's house in which Jessie lived and worked in 1871 was called "Liberton St Agnes". This was a large villa off the east side of Kirk Brae, a short distance behind another villa called "Mount Pleasant". Both villas were approximately half way between the streets now called Kenilworth Drive and Springwood Park. In 1871 these villas were on the north edge of the village of Liberton but are now surrounded by housing from the second half of the 20th century. Around 2005, St Agnes was demolished, and a Scandinavian-style wooden apartment complex was built on the site.



Jessie Rose was descended from the Roses and Grants who lived near Grantown-on-Spey to the north-west of the Cairngorms.

The village of Cromdale, looking south-east.





LOWER BALMENACH FARMHOUSE, CROMDALE

Jessie Rose worked as a domestic servant here in the early 1860s. The Balmenach distillery is the cluster of buildings in the distance at the left of the picture.



Causewayside, south Edinburgh, looking towards Liberton, 1869. Jessie lived and worked about two miles from here. The hills behind Liberton can be seen in the distance.



In 1871 Jessie Rose lived and worked in Kirk Brae, in one of the large villas (circled, top right) which were being built in large numbers throughout Liberton and Newington.



Waterloo Place leading to Regent Road. Jessie lived on Calton Hill, at number 24, whose door is just out of shot at the left of the picture



India Place, Stockbridge (looking east), where Jessie Rose died in 1931. Jessie's house was near the junction with North West Circus Place, at the far end of the picture on the right.



India Place, looking west. The street to the right is Gloucester Street, leading down to Stockbridge. Jessie's house is just out of view to the left of the picture.



India Place, looking west. This was taken in the 1950s but the street is essentially unchanged from the 1930s when Jessie died there. As in the picture above right, Jessie's house is just out of view to the left of the picture behind the photographer.

William Wight 1840-1895

Father of Isabella Wight. William's father, Robert Wight, a porter by trade, hailed from Gifford, near Haddington, East Lothian: his mother, Jane Shepherd, was born on Redheughs Farm, south-east of Dalhousie Castle (in the parish of Cockpen outside Bonnyrigg), Midlothian. William's parents appear to have had their first child together in Manor, near Peebles, but had settled in Leith by 1828 where all their subsequent children were born

Brought up at 7 Giles Street (See Historical Note), William worked as a horse carter (later in life he became a railway porter then a dock labourer) and at the age of 19 married Eliza Millar. The family retained strong connections with Giles Street: William lived at No. 8 as a young bachelor and his parents moved to No. 13 where his mother died in 1872. His father Robert then moved to 19 Mitchell Street, off Constitution Street, where he died in 1874. A number of members of the extended Wight family also stayed in and around Giles Street.

By 1881, after some years at 8 Giles Street, then at 33 Sheriff Brae, William and Eliza had moved to 109 Giles Street with their seven children, the eldest being 22, and the youngest 4 years old. A decade later an adopted son, William Hill, was living with the family.

Shortly after 1891, having moved house to 2 Whitfield Lane off Leith Walk (now Crown Place) the family flitted once more, this time to 7 Cadiz Street, and William Wight died there at the age of 55. The cause of death was heart disease and pneumonia.

More than 80 Wights are recorded as having been born in the Yester/Gifford area during the century before William's birth in 1840, and 100 more were scattered throughout East Lothian.

Historical Note

Nos 7, 8 and 13 Giles Street, where the Wights lived, were part of two blocks of tenements between Trinity House in the Kirkgate and St Anthony's Lane. They were demolished in 1914: nothing was ever re-built on the site and it was eventually used as a car park for Kirkgate shoppers. No 109 was right behind Trinity House and was next door to a pub.



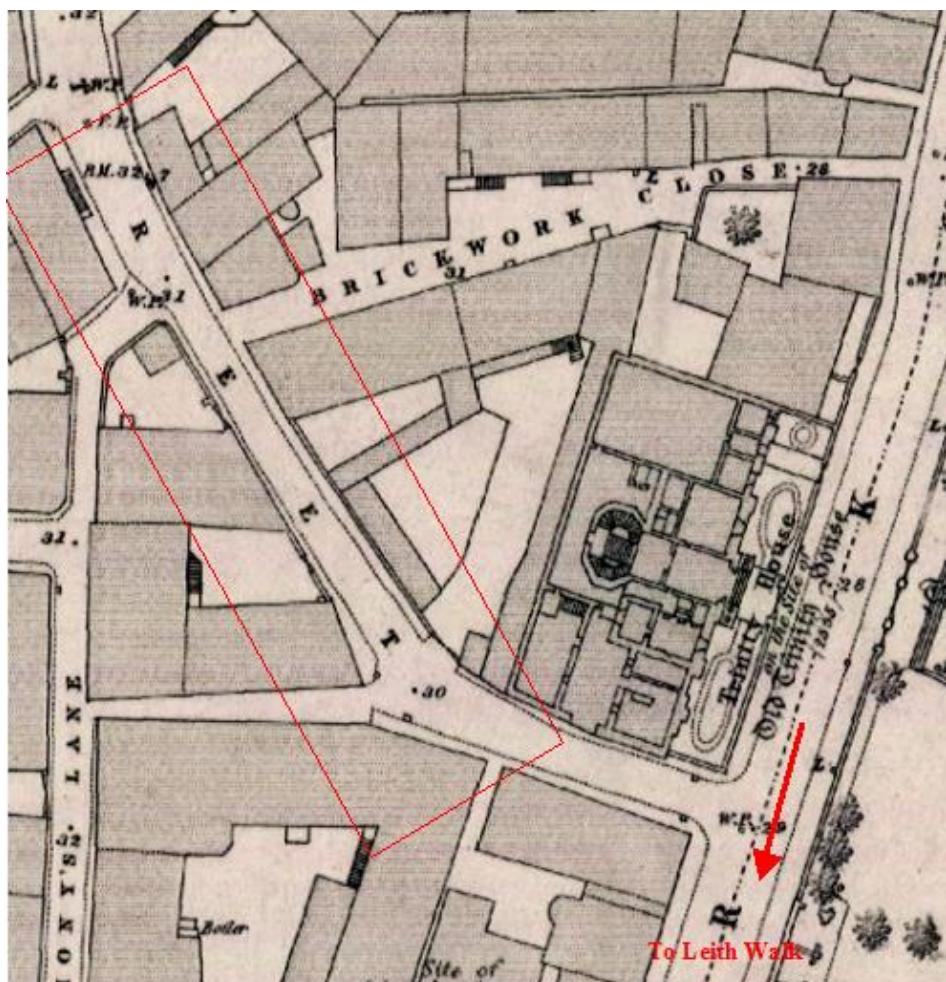
Gifford in the 19th century. Parish records show that the Wight family had been settled here and throughout the parish of Yester since before the 1750s.

This photo of Gifford was taken in the 1950s but would have looked much like this when William Wight's father was brought up here in the early 19th century.





Bonnyrigg, late 19th century. William Wight's mother, Jane Shepherd, was brought up a couple of miles south-east of here.



This map from the 1850s shows the tenement blocks containing Nos 7, 8, 13 and 109 Giles Street. The Kirkgate is on the right of the picture.

Cables Wynd, looking from Yardheads towards Giles Street. The building on the right was the Leith Distillery. In the 1960s it was demolished to make way for the "banana flats".



View of Giles Street from behind Trinity House. The hairdresser, centre, was at No.9 Giles Street. The Wights' house at no.8 is behind the lamp and brick structure to the left. Various members of the Wight family also lived at Nos. 10 and 13 which were entered from the small courtyard on the right of the picture.



10-13 Giles Street: Robert Wight lived here with wife Jane in the early 1870s



This photo shows (left) 105-109 Giles Street, now demolished. William Wight lived at 109 in the 1880s. This view shows the final section of Giles Street as it curves round to meet the Kirkgate at Trinity House. The lane on the left is Brickwork Close.



By the time William Wight died, many of the closes in Giles Street had been demolished to make way for Henderson Street, eight. This view is taken from one of the corners of Giles Street which crosses the picture from right to left. All the buildings here looked exactly the same in William's lifetime. The buildings at the top left of the photo were destroyed to make way for the "banana flats" in the 1960s. At the top right of the picture, the building on the corner of Parliament Street and Henderson Street has remained unchanged since William's day.

Eliza Millar 1837-1906

Mother of Isabella Wight. Eliza's father, John, was a haberdasher, possibly from Linlithgow. He and Eliza's mother Isabella Whiteford never married, and apart from a mention on Eliza's marriage and death certificates, John vanishes from the records and has proven impossible to track down. Eliza spent her childhood with her mother and her grandfather James, a shoemaker, in the parish of Abercorn (at Camphill, a farm about a mile south-west of Philpstoun). By her early teens, Eliza had moved with her mother to Kirkliston village and was working as a farm labourer. She moved into Leith at some point in the 1850s.

When at the age of 22 Eliza married William Wight in 1859, she was a dairymaid living and working in John Wood's Dairy at Springfield. This was a small row of cottages set back from Leith Walk between what is now Springfield Street and New Orchardfield. Interestingly, 30 years later Eliza's daughter, Eliza Wight also worked for John Wood as a dairymaid, which suggests that Eliza remained in contact with her former employer. Eliza and William married in Summerfield House, in Restalrig Road (now number 67). A decade later, the couple had moved to 33 Sheriff Brae by the Water of Leith, where daughter Isabella was born.

After moving with her family to Giles Street, then to Whitfield Lane (now Crown Place) and Cadiz Street in the 1890s, Eliza died at the age of 69 in the Leith Public Health Hospital, East Pilton. This later became the Northern General Hospital in Ferry Road, near Crewe Toll. (It is now a supermarket whose car park is the actual site of the hospital). The cause of death was given as "senile decay".

Main Street, Uphall. When Eliza Millar was born here in 1837, this was a small rural village with a population of around 300. By the end of the 19th century, this had reached 1,800 due to the opening of shale mines.



Map showing location of Summerfield House in Restalrig Road



Sheriff Brae drawn around 1870 when Eliza, William and family lived there. On the right, in the foreground, is number 33 where Isabella Wight was born.



Foot of Leith Walk, early 1900s: Eliza Millar and family lived in Whitfield Lane (now Crown Place) across from the Tobacco Manufacturer on the right of the picture.

William Nicol Rose 1870-1904

Father of Isabella Rose. William was born the illegitimate offspring of Jessie Rose and an Edinburgh police constable, George Nicol (George died of smallpox, aged 28, a year after William's birth). William was immediately put into the care of a childless couple, Thomas and Mary Mossman, living at 2 Poplar Lane, off Leith Links. By the age of 10 William had officially become the couple's adopted son, and when Thomas Mossman died at some point in the 1880s, Mary and young William moved into 44 Constitution Street, living with David and Isabella Wilkie, who were in-laws of Mary's. It can be assumed that this couple were kind to William and made a lasting impression on him, since he later gave his daughter Isabella the middle name Wilkie (see Genealogical Note).

When he was 21, William worked as a general labourer and ripplespinner. He had a child - called William - with Isabella Wight and married her four months later, in November 1891 at the South Leith Manse. This building subsequently became the Park View House Hotel (at 14 Hermitage Place). Three decades later, William's daughter Isabella married Alexander Shiels at the same location.

William and Isabella set up house in 11 Poplar Lane and had three more children (the oldest, William, subsequently died in the Great War, at Meteren, France, in 1918). By 1895, they had shifted house to 7 Poplar Lane. After the birth of their youngest child Isabella in 1897, the family moved into a flat at 45 Glover Street (see Historical Note). They then lived at 7 Bath Street where twins David and Thomas were born in 1900. Sadly, both babies died after a few months – David in May and Thomas in August. On both death certificates, the doctor's handwriting is illegible and it is impossible to make out what the causes were.

William now worked variously as a dock labourer, a ripplespinner and finally a wool factory worker. He did not live long enough to see any of his children grow up – the oldest was only 12 when William died of tuberculosis at the age of 33. He died in North Junction Street in the North Leith Poorhouse (used as a hospital as well as a refuge for the homeless). The Poorhouse was later demolished to make way for David Kilpatrick's School. William was buried in Seafield Cemetery in a common grave, plot number N/649.

Genealogical Note

William gave his elder daughter Mary the middle name Mossman. The younger of the daughters, Isabella Wilkie Rose, passed the name Wilkie to her second daughter Isabella Wilkie Rose Shiels.

Historical Note

At about the time the Rose family moved into Glover Street, Leith Central Railway Station was in the process of being built. Before this, Glover Street had run through from Manderston Street to Duke Street. It was now chopped in half and came to a dead end at the station wall. Beside this wall a small tunnel was built, leading to Crown Place and known to Leithers as "the hole in the wall". In the 1970s, the railway station was dismantled to make way for Leith Waterworld and a supermarket with a car park. The hole in the wall vanished and Glover Street and Ferrier Street were entirely destroyed, to be replaced by new housing.



Chapel House, in Potterrow, photographed from Crichton Street. This was the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital when William Rose was born here in 1870.



Queen Street (now Shore Place) showing how much of Leith had fallen into a state of disrepair. William Rose would have been familiar with scenes like this throughout Leith.

Smith's Land, which lay between Leith Links and Salamander Street. Fox Lane goes off to the left. William Rose spent the first dozen years of his life in Poplar Lane, which runs just behind and parallel to the building in the picture. All of Smith's Land and much of Poplar Lane was demolished in the 1924 Leith Improvement Scheme.





Tolbooth Wynd, at the foot of the Kirkgate. Like all Leithers, William Rose and the next two generations of his family viewed this area as the heart of Leith. It was all demolished in the 1960s and replaced with high-rise and other housing, but was provided with nothing to replace the shops and pubs which had made it so important to the people of Leith.



This photograph of the foot of Leith Walk was taken in 1891, the year William Rose married Isabella Wight. Great Junction Street goes off to the left of the picture, with a view down the Kirkgate in the background. This was the view from the corner of Whitfield Lane (now Crown Place) where Isabella was living when William married her.

Did William Rose ever know his mother? Below is an attempt to answer this question:

William Nicol Rose was born in the Royal Maternity Hospital in Edinburgh. In the 19th century, most working-class people were born at home: there was no health service, and hospitals were expensive. Poorer people tended to give birth in hospital either because they were having a difficult pregnancy or because they were unmarried and did not intend to keep the child. The hospital authorities could arrange for such a child to be adopted or placed in an orphanage. However, adoption was not a legal matter in Scotland until 1930, and a mother could informally arrange to hand her child over to a relative or friend to be brought up.

There is some evidence to suggest that William Rose's mother Jessie knew or had some connection with the Mossmans to whom she gave William and who brought him up in Poplar Lane. On his marriage certificate, William gives his mother's name; he also knows that she married John Kay after William was born. If William had been put up for adoption by the hospital when he was born, his mother would never have been told who his adopted parents were (this was standard practice to ensure that a mother did not try to claim her child back from the people who were bringing it up). William could only have known who his real mother was if the Mossmans had told him; and they could only have known this if Jessie herself had any contact with him:

1891 ROSE, WILLIAM NICOLL - WIGHT, ISABELLA (Statutory Marriages 692/02 0297)

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1891 MARRIAGES in the DISTRICT, of SOUTH LEITH, in the COUNTY, of EDINBURGH.

No.	When, Where, and How Married.	Signatures of Parties. Rank or Profession, Whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signatures of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Dicatorator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
1891.	By me		44			Captain	1891.
	on the twenty seventh William Nicoll Rose 21 day of November at Emmanuel United Reformed Church Glasgow	Constituted Leith	Leith	Jessie Rose	James Mitchell minister youth	December 2	
				Subsequently married John Kay	Princes	Leith	
297	At Leith						
	Afterwards having informed the Church of Scotland	Isabella Wright	21	Princes Leith	William Wight Archdeacon	James Dalhousie Wright	
	in mill street				Eliza Wright my Miller	Eliza Wright Wright	Princes Registrar

William was given his father's surname Nicol as a middle name. On his death certificate, both his natural parents are named. His death was registered by the Governor of the North Leith Poorhouse, and the Governor could only have obtained this information either from William himself when he arrived in the hospital, or Jessie Rose after William's death (note that George Nicol on William's birth certificate is the "reputed father": this indicates that George, had he still been alive, would have had no legal claim to being William's father).

1904 ROSE, WILLIAM NICOL (Statutory Deaths 692/010254)

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1904. DEATHS in the District of North Leith		in the County of Edinburgh								
(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	(5.)	(6.)	(7.)	(8.)	(9.)	(10.)	(11.)
Ref. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd.	Ref. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd. Recd.	Name and Surname. Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname & Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant by whom certified.	Signature & Qualification of Informant, and Number & Street of the House in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.	
		William Gordon Single	1904, June	M. 60 years	William Gordon Jeweller (deceased)	Sclerotic & Spinal Cord Hypertrophic Congestion	J. P. Carson	1904, July 1st At LEITH.		
	253	Ship master Married to (1) Jane Somerville (2) Christina Linton.	Twenty ninth 14 h. pm		Ann Gordon of the Rings.	As certified by J. Allan Gray M.D.	1 North East Street, Leith.	North Berwick Regt.		
		William Nicol Single	1904, June	M. 59 years	George Nicol Baker (Robt. his Father) (deceased)	Pulmonary	R. Christie Governor T. M. D.	1904, July 1st At LEITH.		
	254	Factory Worker, Married to Isabella Wright (Illegitimate)	Thirty 14 h. 30 m. pm.		Christie Rose Dorothy Bryant	As certified by George Donald		North Berwick Regt.		

It is probable that none of William's children knew about George Nicol - and they probably never saw his death certificate (the oldest, William, was only 12 when he died, and the youngest, Isabella, was 7). Although illegitimacy was common in 19th-century Scotland, it was still stigmatised, particularly by the Churches. When William's wife died nearly 40 years after him, her son Robert registered her death and described her as the widow of "William Mossman Rose". This suggests that William had told his children that Mossman was his middle name and they probably believed that the Mossmans were their real grandparents.

Isabella Wight 1870-1941

Mother of Isabella Rose. Born and brought up in 33 Sheriff Brae, then 109 Giles Street. Isabella was employed as a rope mill worker when she married William Rose in 1891. Since William was a ripplespinner at the time, they probably met at work (the Edinburgh Roperie and Sailcloth Company in Bath street was a major employer at that time, having 1,000 workers on its payroll). The couple had a child, William, in July 1891, before marrying in November of that year. At this point, Isabella was living with her parents at 2 Whitfield Lane (now Crown Place).

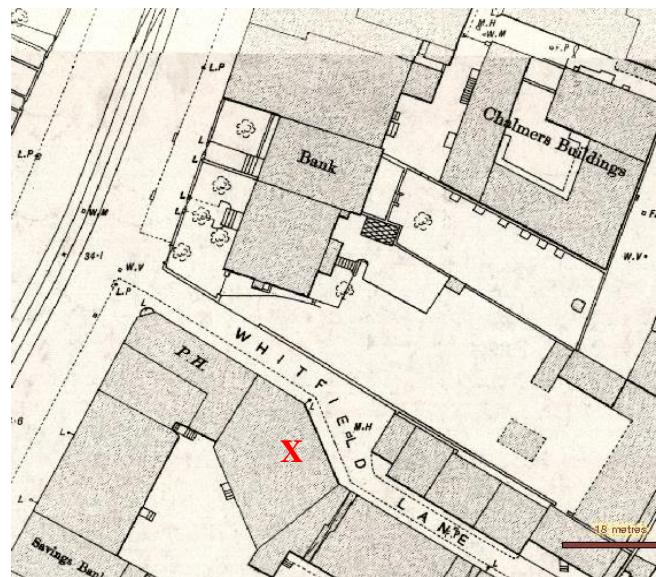
Isabella endured much grief in her life: twin sons were born and died in the year 1900; she lost her husband to tuberculosis in 1904, and it is not known how or with whose help she brought up William, Mary, Robert and Isabella. Her mother died two years later, and in late 1914, young William was killed in the Great War. At some point after 1922, Isabella moved into 3 Tennant Street, the same stair as her daughter Isabella was living in after she married Alexander Shiels.

In July 1941, Isabella died in Longmore Hospital in Newington (Salisbury Place). The cause of death was "rodent ulcer of face". This is now known as basal cell carcinoma, and is a form of skin cancer which is fatal in only a tiny percentage of cases. However, Isabella appears to have been unlucky: the cancer spread to other areas and became terminal. She was buried in Seafield Cemetery in a common grave, plot number R/9.



Sheriff Brae, late 1800s. Isabella Wight was born in the block of tenements on the left of the picture.

Whitfield Lane (later re-named Crown Place) as it was in the early 1890s when Isabella lived there. The red cross marks her tenement stair (No.2). Chalmers Buildings and all the space in front of it was demolished when Leith Central Station was built a few years later. Crown Place was re-developed in the 1970s when the old tenements were replaced by new housing. Only the public house on the corner with Leith Walk was left untouched.



Women working at the Leith Roperie around 1907. Isabella worked here a decade earlier and probably met William Rose here. Two of Isabella's grandchildren, Bobby and Millie Shiels, also worked here half a century later.





A rare surviving photo of Isabella Wight. This was probably taken in the early 1930s, almost certainly in Isabella's first-floor flat at 3 Tennant Street. If the baby in the christening dress is her granddaughter Millie, the date would be 1931; if it was her grandson Bill the date would be 1933.



Longmore Hospital, Salisbury Place. This was known as the "Edinburgh Hospital for Incurables". Isabella Wight died here in 1941 after a small sore on her face turned into a malignant cancer. Her grandchildren attested that, despite all the sorrows in her life, Isabella was a woman with a naturally cheerful disposition and an irrepressible sense of humour.

Isabella Wilkie Rose 1897-1965

Mother of Nan, Alex, Ella, George, Bobby , Millie and Bill Shiels. Born at 7 Poplar Lane, off Leith Links. The family moved a couple of years later to 45 Glover Street where Isabella spent her childhood. At some time before 1911 the family moved back to the Links area again, this time to 6 Duncan Street (now Duke Place).

Isabella had more than her share of tragedy in life: twin siblings David and Thomas died in infancy; she was only 6 years old when her father died; brother William was killed in the Great War in 1914; and later in life her fourth child, George, only lived for a month.

In 1922, When she married Alexander Shiels in the South Leith Manse (at 14 Hermitage Place) Isabella was employed as a stationery worker at the Lochend Printing Works. This was situated on the corner of Dagety Road and Marionville Road. The couple continued to live in 3 Tennant Street where they remained until early 1965, moving that year to 48 Granton Crescent. Also living in 3 Tennant Street were Isabella's brother Robert, her mother Isabella; and Alexander's sisters Annie and Agnes and his father Alexander.

During Isabella's lifetime, Tennant Street was a centre of industry, with a vinegar works and various engineering premises. A major incident occurred in May 1937 when a garage, recently refurbished by Cochrane motor dealers suffered a disastrous fire. Two years later, a major fire caused serious damage to a stationery factory round the corner in Bonnington Road.

In her later years, Isabella suffered from chronic bronchitis and emphysema. The combination of these put a strain on her cardiac system and Isabella died at 5.45am on the morning of Thursday 2nd September 1965, peacefully in her bed at 48 Granton Crescent. The cause of death was "acute congestive heart failure".



Ferrier Street, looking towards Glover Street. Isabella Rose was brought up in one of the houses round the corner to the left. The "hole in the wall" leading to Leith Walk is round the corner to the right. This photograph was taken in the 1960s and shows how the area had deteriorated to a slum dwelling.



Ferrier Street looking towards Easter Road. Across Easter Road is the small street now called Academy Street leading to the Eastern Saw Mill where Isabella's husband Alexander worked.



Glover Street photographed in the early 1960s when it had become all but uninhabitable. The red cross marks number 45 where Isabella Rose stayed as a child in the early 1900s



Leith Kirkgate in the 1950s - the heart of Leith, and a familiar sight to Isabella Rose and her family. In the distance is Tolbooth Wynd to the left and Queen Charlotte Street to the right. The small lane where the café stands is Brickwork Close, leading to Giles Street.



Bonnington Primary School, Bonnington Road. All of Isabella Rose's children and some of her grandchildren were educated here



Isabella Wilkie Rose at the age of 24 in 1922. The photograph was taken in the studio of Alexander Roberts at Jock's Lodge. Isabella's magazine shows her wearing 1920s fashion and hairstyle; the clothes are of a style which pre-dates the First World War.



Isabella Rose (right) with her daughter Nan next to her. This looks like it may have been a works day out, probably around the early 1950s

Isabella's oldest daughter Nan (1923-2006) with (left) brother-in-law Robert Kent and (right) Nan's husband David Scott. In the front row are four of Isabella's grandchildren. From left: Diane Kent, Margaret Notman, Carol Scott and Richard Kent.



Isabella's oldest daughter Nan with husband David and daughter Carol.



Isabella Wilkie Rose Shiels - Isabella's second daughter (1929-1987)





Isabella with daughters Ella (left) and Nan (right), probably around the mid-1950s



Isabella Rose (centre) with daughters Nan and Ella. Behind, on the left, is Nan's husband David Scott and, right, Isabella's husband, Alexander Shiels. This photo was probably taken around 1963, a couple of years before Isabella died.